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ABSTRACT

This survey explores community service programs involving early adolescents. School-based programs are emphasized. The following programs were selected as models of appropriate service learning and are described in detail: (1) Friendly PEERsuasion, a peer tutoring program in Arlington (Texas); (2) The Peer Counseling Program in Oakland (California); (3) Resolving Conflict Creatively, a peer mediation program in New York (New York); (4) The Jones-Village Partnership Program, which pairs adolescents with senior citizens in Upper Arlington (Ohio); (5) The Early Adolescent Helper Program, in which young adolescents play several helping roles in New York (New York), Phoenix (Arizona), and other cities; (6) The Community Service Program, in which all middle school students in Shoreham (New York) perform a variety of services; and (7) The Youth Leadership Program for "problem students" in Camden (New Jersey). The following selection criteria were applied: (1) services are recognized as "real" by participants and those they serve; (2) adolescents are given genuine responsibilities and accountability; (3) youngsters practice decision-making and problem-solving; (4) the program includes a strong learning component; and (5) adult facilitators are sensitive to and knowledgeable about young adolescents. Eight additional programs are sketched in less detail, each following the major case study in which young people play similar roles. Based on an analysis of participant roles and common program elements and obstacles, recommendations are suggested in the following areas: (1) program development; (2) policy formation; (3) staffing; (4) community action programs; (5) school-based programs; and (6) the need for a national resource center/clearinghouse. A list of 22 references and a list of nine resources are appended. (FMW)

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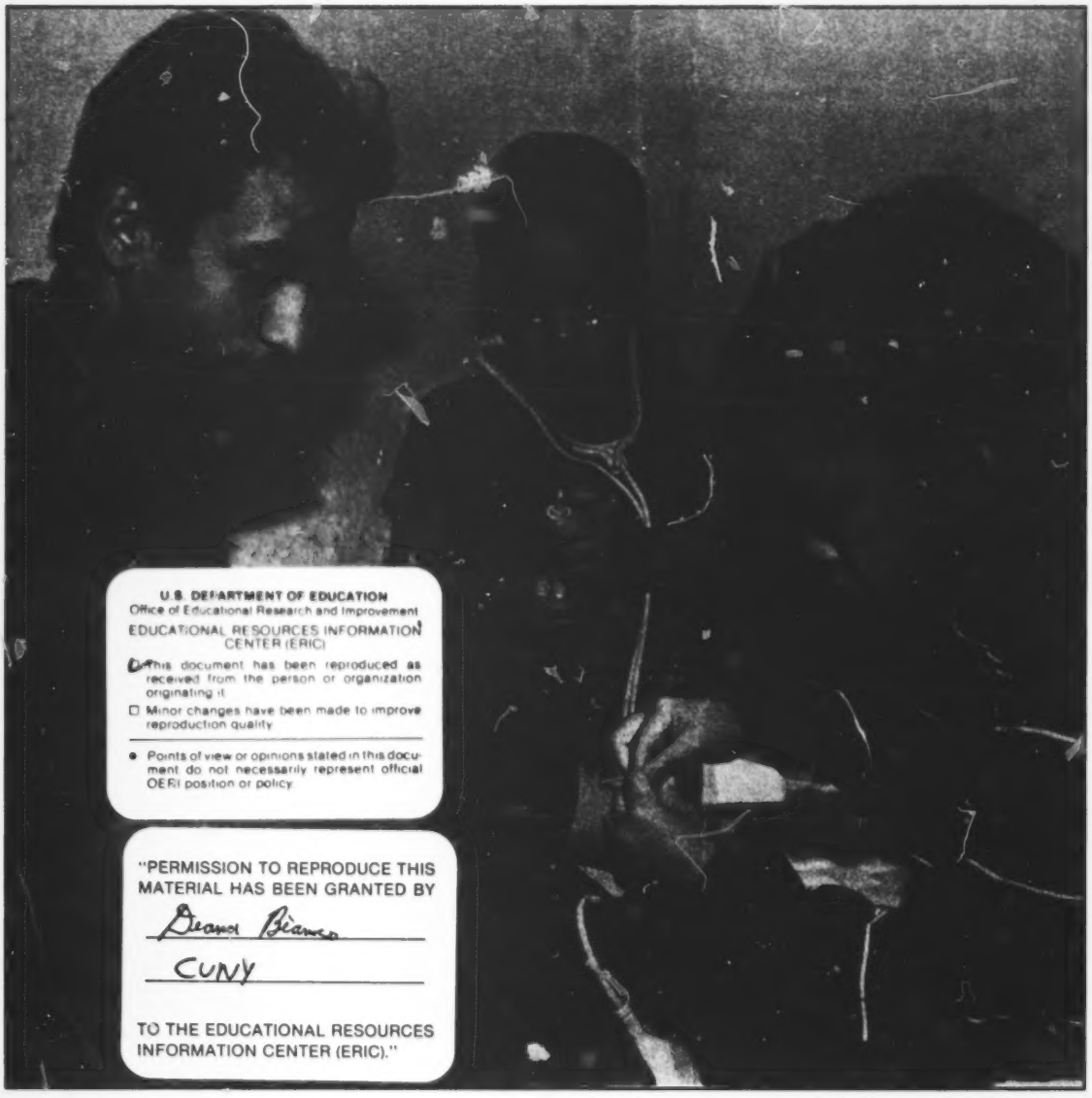

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A Survey Conducted by the Early Adolescent Helper Program

May 1989

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CONNECTIONS

SERVICE LEARNING IN THE MIDDLE GRADES

A Survey Conducted by the
Early Adolescent Helper Program

Written by
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Center for Advanced Study in Education/CASE
The Graduate School and University Center of the City University of New York

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This report owes its existence to many individuals. The case studies and additional program descriptions are the product of countless hours of thoughtful preparation, interviews, observations, reviews of materials, and both formal and informal discussions. But beyond the careful and patient work of project staff and the generosity of those in the field who shared their accomplishments, concerns, and advice, this booklet is a symbol. It represents a recognition of the unique nature of early adolescence and a commitment to the role of community service in the positive development of young people as they move through the early adolescent years.

We are indebted to the Carnegie Corporation of New York, whose support enabled us to undertake and publish this survey. Alice Angell, Assistant Director of the Early Adolescent Helper Program, Dr. Marjorie Hendler, consultant, and Diane Harrington, principal author of this report, have been involved at every step of this project's development, from formulating and testing the questionnaires and interview formats, through site visits, to written program reviews. Above all our thanks go to those in the field -- the school administrators, community agency staff members, teachers, the "clientele" whom the young people serve -- for their unfailing good will and cooperation. We were welcomed at every site visit; busy people repeatedly took time to talk at length about their work. Diverse as they are, these programs share some elements, and perhaps the most striking are the enthusiasm of the participants -- young people and adults alike -- and their desire to share their experiences and to learn about the experiences of others. We thank especially the young volunteers who are the center of each of these programs; not only are they the most convincing argument for the value of youth service, but their thoughtful discussions and their willingness to participate in interviews gave the stamp of authenticity to this report.

We hope that these accounts will be useful for practitioners and for those who shape policy. We hope, further, that this report will be the precursor of an ongoing project, a clearinghouse of community service and service learning programs that involve young adolescents, and a resource center that will provide technical assistance and facilitate the exchange of information and materials.

Finally, very special thanks must go to Diane Harrington, who has taken a mass of field notes, curriculum materials, suggestions, comments, and hours of discussion and made them into a coherent and usable source of information and reference.

Joan Schine
Director
Early Adolescent Helper Program

INTRODUCTION

Recent and growing interest in the early adolescent years, in middle school reform, and in youth community service come together in this report. With funding from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, staff and consultants from the Early Adolescent Helper Program conducted an exploratory survey on the nature and extent of service learning programs for junior high and middle school youngsters throughout the country. While far from comprehensive, the survey as reported on here is encouraging in many ways. The number and quality of such programs have increased in recent years. It is now possible to describe models for schools and community agencies interested in starting or improving their own community service programs for 11-to-14-year-old youngsters. Such models -- actual programs described in some detail -- form the centerpiece of this report.

This report presents the rationale for service learning during early adolescence; the criteria and process used in the survey to identify model programs; case studies of 15 programs; analysis of the common elements and obstacles in these programs; and recommendations for both policy-makers and program administrators. References and organizational resources are included at the end of the report.

Underlying all the information, discussion, and analysis that follow is a two-part belief: in the ability of young adolescents to make genuine, lasting, and responsible contributions to their communities and schools through service programs; and in the value of such programs to the educational and ethical development of the youngsters who participate. The programs described here are not just curricular "add-ons" or after-school supervision for young people, despite the fact that many still have precarious institutional status; these programs truly demonstrate that young adolescents can <u>provide</u> as well as <u>receive</u> service and that both they and their communities benefit as a result.

Chapter 1
RATIONALE

Simply put, Youth Participation is the action whereby youth learn to give. This definition comes from a story about a reformed juvenile delinquent who was involved in a community service program. He said, "Nobody ever treated me like I had anything to give. Just take. So that's all I ever did. Take." It was so simple. We must be taught that we have something to give.

--Jonathan Cutler, student at Tufts University and former Honorary Co-Chairman of the National Network of Runaway and Youth Services

YOUTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

Adolescents who help to care for young children, who assist those with handicaps, tutor their peers or younger children, visit the aging, mediate playground disputes, counsel troubled peers, organize campaigns to register voters or to clean up streams are filling the void that our age of technology and specialization has created in their lives.

Harold Howe delineates the dilemma faced by most young people in the United States today:

> In a society based on the work ethic, work helps to define each one of us. To the extent that we do something useful to the society, we gain a feeling of belonging and contributing that sustains us even when the work we do is difficult or dull ... [Y]outh has been progressively denied the opportunity to be engaged in work that is important to others and therefore denied the rewards such work produces. I think that some of youth's negative tendencies today can be traced to this situation. (Howe, 7)

Through community service, however, young people assume meaningful roles and respond to the real needs of others -- as well as to their own need to be needed.

Historically, we have depended upon volunteers for a wide range of services in our communities. The need for such services continues and will probably increase in the years ahead, while the available pool of volunteers is shrinking. Women, once the mainstay of volunteer efforts, are entering the labor force in greater and greater numbers. Moreover, values appear to be shifting away from helping others with the emergence of what many call the "Me Generation." But many communities have found in their young people an untapped reservoir of energy and compassion. Experiencing the satisfactions of making a contribution in the teen years not only benefits the communities in which these young people live, but may also encourage a lifelong commitment to volunteering.

Assuming meaningful roles benefits youth as well. Increased self-esteem and a sense of accomplishment accompany service to others. Through community service, young people can also explore careers and workplaces, learn the attitudes and behaviors of the world of work. They are

challenged to work collegially with others, to compromise, to communicate successfully. They are encouraged to acquire and exercise new skills. They are presented with "real world" chances to confront problems, consider alternatives, and find solutions.

Educators, youth workers (including members of the juvenile justice system), and observers of society express anxiety about the growing alienation of our young people. The media focus on "at-risk" youth (the dropout, the school failure, the runaway, the drug user or seller, the teen parent) obscures the fact that all too many "well-adjusted" young people are equally prey to negative forces. Both cause and effect of this alienation is the pervasive negative image of today's adolescent. But when young people become involved in community service, the "we/they" stereotypes of both young and old are replaced by new perceptions and understandings.

THE YOUNG ADOLESCENT AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

This report will demonstrate that even the youngest adolescents can play active, contributing roles in their communities. In re nt years, awareness of the unique needs and traits of the 11 to 14 year old has grown. The work of Joan Lipsitz and colleagues at the Center for Early Adolescence at the University of North Carolina, of Conrad Toepfer, Jacquelynne Eccles, and others underscores the importance of understanding these needs when designing programs and experiences for this age group:

> Sound program planning must respond, not to some general notion of what they are like, but to the specific needs of their stage of development. In differentiating between early and late adolescence, we must recognize that there are few absolutes in human development. The differences are largely a matter of proportion and emphasis, but in the aggregate they are significant. (Schine, Shoup, and Harrington, 2)

Early adolescence is characterized primarily by change. Physical change is the most obvious, but many other cha..ges are typical of this period as well: shifting interests; the loosening of ties to parents; the intensified importance of peer relationships; the beginning of the move from what Piaget calls concrete to abstract thinking; periods of extreme self-doubt; unpredictable and swift changes in mood; a dawning idealism and altruism, often seemingly at odds with a new self-absorption; a desire to reach out to adults other than parents and teachers; a drive to test values and

to try on new roles. In the midst of such turmoil, so much that is unfamiliar although peculiarly personal, it is no wonder that the emerging adolescent seems often to be out of control or disconnected from the immediate scene.

It is possible, however, to help the early adolescent focus his or her energy and growth. Community service is uniquely suited to this, as it draws together some of the inherent developmental inconsistencies of this age group:

> Early adolescents are attempting to establish a sense of who they are. They are searching for role models and possible careers. They find it hard to establish a sense of purpose in a society that seems to have no use and no liking for them ... Morally, they are idealistic but impatient with what seem to be flaws in the fabric of social justice. They are generous to others less fortunate and will often work hard to help them. (Schonhaut, 18)

Involvement in community service can meet many of the special needs of the early adolescent. Before examining appropriate roles and projects for the middle or junior high school youngster, it will help to keep those needs in mind:

--to test and discover new skills
--to develop a sense of competence, an antidote to the self-doubt of this period
--to socialize, to test themselves as social creatures
--to discover a place for themselves in the world, to create a vision of a personal future
--to take part in the world of adults, but also to retreat to a world of their peers
--to know a variety of adults, representative of different backgrounds and occupations, including potential role models
--to test developing value systems in authentic situations
--to speak and be heard, to know that they can make a difference
--to see tangible or visible outcomes of their projects
--to be recognized for their accomplishments
--to have opportunities to make real decisions, with appropriate limits
--to be supported and guided by adults who appreciate their problems and their promise

MIDDLE SCHOOL REFORM

Virtually everyone who works with early adolescents agrees that reform is urgently needed at the junior high or middle school level. Agreement about the nature of that reform is harder to find. Given what we know about the developmental needs and characteristics of early adolescence, however, it is evident that the answer does not lie in more of the same -- the "get tough" emphasis on academic content advocated in some quarters. A wide variety of approaches will need to be introduced; some will be adapted, others discarded. No single formula or program will meet all needs nor serve all among the diverse population in our public schools.

Every student, regardless of intellectual ability, career aspirations, or family background, will need to be equipped for living in the twenty-first century, in an environment and society we cannot today envision. The National Association of Secondary School Principals has characterized the middle school's role in this way:

> The content of today's curriculum serves primarily to develop intellectual habits and capacities that are likely to be applicable to other times and settings. The curriculum must balance skill development with content coverage, which may be outdated before it is used. To prepare youth for the future, the middle level school curriculum must develop intellectual skills and an understanding of humankind that will permit the student to gather information, organize it in a meaningful fashion, evaluate its veracity and utility, form reasonable conclusions about it, and plan for individual and collective action. (NASSP, 5, emphasis added)

Community service, far more than any discrete academic subject area, can help the student to develop that understanding, will challenge him or her to collect and analyze relevant information, and to plan and take action. The service experience and the academic curriculum together can provide for the student a more coherent and balanced school experience than even the best classroom-bound course of study.

There are indications that the current reform wave will at least attempt to create this balance. New York State has issued a Draft Policy Statement on Middle-Level Education and Schools with Middle-Level Grades that recognizes and lists explicitly the developmental traits of this age group. Moreover, it calls for "opportunities within the school.

program [for middle school students] to develop as individuals," and suggests further, "Schools enrolling middle-level students should ... have schedules with flexible time assignments within blocks of time to encourage interdisciplinary programs and creative time use." (New York State Education Department, 5)

A number of reports, including one in 1988 by the Children's Defense Fund (CDF), also recommend flexible scheduling for the middle grades. CDF, in addition, urges schools to emphasize "active" learning and to provide students with "numerous opportunities to relate school and what they are learning to their lives." (Children's Defense Fund, 8)

VALUES EDUCATION

"There is a genuine crisis in our society and schools that is receiving far too little attention -- a crisis in caring," writes Nel Nodding of Stanford University (Education Week, 12/7/88). Across the political spectrum, from the US Department of Education to the local school building, from teachers' unions to concerned parents, those who agree with her have called for schools to reassert their historical role of teaching values to young people:

> At a time when the traditional structures of caring have deteriorated, schools must become places where teachers and students live together, talk with each other, take delight in each other's company. My guess is that when schools focus on what really matters in life, the cognitive ends we now pursue so painfully and artificially will be achieved somewhat more naturally. (Nodding 1988)

The dramatic rises in teen pregnancy, drug use, crime, suicide, and dropping out of school, according to David Hornbeck, prove that the crisis is reaching desperate proportions. Hornbeck agrees that values education is the business of schools:

> Learning to care ... has a place in the public schools. It should not be considered extracurricular. It should be treated as a fundamental part of any self-respecting school that is attempting to nurture young people in their initial quest toward an effective and satisfying adulthood. (Hornbeck, 11-12)

Which values should be taught is a matter for controversy. Some reformers emphasize personal character: values such as

integrity, honesty, self-discipline. Others, like Nodding, stress interpersonal relationships: caring, respect for others, valuing human diversity. Still others underscore the importance of learning to be a good citizen: "Regardless of whatever fad currently preoccupies educators, developing the attitudes and skills for democratic living continues as one of the major goals of education." (Lipka, Beane, and O'Connell, 7) And some, like Hornbeck, believe that all of these different emphases can be subsumed under the concept of "caring about others and acting like it." (Hornbeck, 7)

Community service can play a unique role in developing all of these values. It not only offers young people opportunities to assume helping roles, demonstrating their capacity to care for others; good programs also provide chances to practice and reflect on these roles, ensuring that new values are internalized. As the Children's Defense Fund points out, the goal is to enable "students to personalize such values and to make reasoned moral and ethical choices." (Children's Defense Fund, 9)

In addition, community service is active learning: "Just reading and talking about [values] is not enough. To learn, really learn, the whys and hows of citizenship requires real and active experience." (Lipka, Beane, and O'Connell, 7) Hornbeck agrees:

> I believe a thoughtful community service program is the single most important component of a first-rate values education program. My reason for that assertion is that nearly all human beings learn best by doing, not by being told or reading ... Values, and particularly the notion of caring about others and acting like it, are particularly conducive to being taught by doing. (Hornbeck, 10)

Chapter 2
THIS SURVEY

OVERVIEW

This survey began to explore the extent, types, and quality of community service programs involving early adolescents throughout the nation. While far from comprehensive, it has confirmed one underlying assumption: the number of such programs has grown considerably in recent years, as has recognition of the value of community service in promoting positive youth development.

The project research team identified and explored dozens of programs, widely varied in type as well as quality and emphasis. Some programs have received attention in the media or at conferences and symposia; others are scarcely known beyond the immediate community but are every bit as effective and worthy of replication.

Seven programs were selected by the research team as models of appropriate service learning for this age group and are described in some detail in the following pages. These programs are:

--Friendly PEERsuasion, a peer tutoring program in Arlington, Texas

--The Peer Counseling Program in Oakland, California

--Resolving Conflict Creatively, a peer mediation program in New York City

--The Jones-Village Partnership Program, in which youngsters are paired with senior citizens in Upper Arlington, Ohio

--The Early Adolescent Helper Program, in which young adolescents play several helping roles in New York City, Phoenix, Arizona, and other cities

--The Community Service Program in Shoreham, New York, in which all middle school students perform a variety of services

--The Youth Leadership Program for "problem students" in Camden, New Jersey

Eight additional programs are sketched in less detail, each following the major case study in which young people play similar roles. These programs are:

--Project Humanity, a peer tutoring program in Minneapolis, Minnesota

--The Valued Youth Partnership Program, a peer tutoring program for dropout-prone youngsters in San Antonio, Texas

--Peer Counselors in Indianapolis, Indiana

--The Peer Counseling Program in Palo Alto, California

--Waves: People and Culture on the Lower East Side, a folklife research and community partnership project in New York City

--Magic Me, in which youngsters are paired with senior citizens in Baltimore, Maryland

--The HUGSS Program (Helping Us Grow through Service and Smiles), a multiple service program in Colorado Springs, Colorado

--Youth Volunteers, a multiple service program in 4-H clubs throughout New York state

CRITERIA

The project research team began by defining essential program characteristics, recognizing that some flexibility would be necessary in looking at programs for this age group. A basic assumption was that programs in which young people perform service for at least several weeks, not just once or twice, would be more valuable for participants. The team agreed to look for a variety of programs, with different service activities, in diverse geographic areas, involving individuals from a variety of ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds. It also decided to give priority to programs in urban settings where young people's needs are so urgent and intense. Finally, it decided that the models being sought were programs that:

--allow young people to perform services recognized as "real" by both themselves and those they serve

--give adolescents genuine responsibilities and hold them accountable

--provide opportunities for youngsters to practice decision-making and problem-solving, individually and

collectively

--include a strong learning component, including training and reflection

--are guided by adult facilitators sensitive to and knowledgeable about young adolescents and committed to helping them mature

Because the public school is the one institution in our society that touches every child, school-based programs were emphasized. But, recognizing that community agencies can reach some children who, for various reasons, will never be drawn into school-sponsored programs, and that they often operate under fewer constraints than do schools, some programs in these agencies were also examined.

THE PROCESS

Beginning in March, 1988, initial inquiries were mailed to various public and private agencies, school districts, individuals, and selected national organizations. Two letters of inquiry were used, accompanied by a brief form for program information: one for school-related programs, one for those based in other organizations.

Data collection instruments were developed, based on the essential program characteristics and general program information. The research team reviewed, pilot-tested, and revised these instruments before using them.

Following up on responses to initial inquiries and other leads, information was first collected by telephone, usually by appointment and often requiring two sessions of 45 minutes to one hour. This was supplemented by a review of program materials submitted by the person interviewed. By mid-June, when most school-related programs were closing for the summer, dozens of programs had been contacted, interviewed, and preliminarily assessed.

In the fall of 1988, programs that were seen as potential models were visited by at least one member of the research team. The seven major case studies presented in this report were all validated through observations and on-site interviews with participants. The eight additional programs have not yet been visited by the team.

LIMITATIONS

Because of limited time and resources, the research team recognizes that this survey only scratches the surface. A number of other promising programs have been located throughout the research process, even as late as December, 1988; these will need to be explored in greater depth in the future. Many more programs will surface, no doubt, as this report is disseminated. Further research and information-gathering, extensive networking, and more publicity are clearly needed. Without exception, program representatives contacted by the research team were enthusiastic, not only about showcasing their own work, but also about the possibility of establishing a clearinghouse for information and technical assistance.

Chapter 3
THE CASE STUDIES

Peer Tutoring Programs

FRIENDLY PEERSUASION

Girls Clubs of America
Arlington, Texas

In a small room at one of the Arlington, Texas, Girls Clubs, two 11-year-old girls are teaching a lesson on good drugs/bad drugs to nine attentive six to ten year olds seated in a rough semi-circle on the floor.

The room is bright and informal. Snacktime remains, still on individual plates, are scattered on a table in the back. An adult staff member sits quietly at a desk in one corner.

The preteen teachers hold up pictures of advertisements, asking students what good or bad drugs are depicted. Eager hands wave. One girl, called upon, is speechless. One of the teachers waits a moment and says, gently and with a smile, "Maybe you'd like us to come back to you." She calls on another.

Although well-prepared, the young teachers confer with each other from time to time. The group's attention never wavers.

The teachers dig into their box of supplies and pass out empty medicine bottles, some prescription, some over-the-counter. Volunteers, with much help, read the labels aloud. The group discusses what the labels tell them, what else they should know, what they can tell about combinations of even "good" drugs.

These girls are taking part in the FRIENDLY PEERSUASION PROJECT, a substance abuse education program run by the Girls Club. "PEERsuaders," adolescent girls aged 11 to 14, teach "PEERsuade-Mes," 6-to-10-year old girls, how to avoid drug and alcohol abuse. Their titles, which might seem artificial to observers, are a source of pride to the girls -- a badge of participating in a program which gives them both fun and increased self-respect.

The program aims to help these girls lead healthier lives by learning decision-making skills, building peer and community support networks, and increasing their cooperation

and leadership skills. Most of them are considered at risk of substance abuse according to the program's carefully defined criteria: they are economically disadvantaged, unsupervised after school ("latchkey"), children of substance abusers, and/or at risk of early pregnancy, criminal behavior, or dropping out of school. In fact, most of the Arlington Girls Club members probably fit into one or another of the at-risk categories, according to Gail Thomas Strong, Assistant Executive Director and one of the program's developers. She points to research indicating that young adolescent girls are more influenced by their peers (male and female) than boys.

All PEERsuaders are Girls Clubs members; most, but not all, PEERsuade-Mes are too. Since the Arlington Girls Club oversees several afterschool programs, some PEERsuade-Mes have been boys in those sites.

About 20 hours of training are required to become a PEERsuader. The curriculum, now in its second draft, relies heavily on "active" or "discovery" learning: activities like role playing, skits, simulation exercises, or puppetry, followed by group discussions. The girls focus on topics such as communication, resisting peer pressure, information about drugs, refusal skills, community resources, and leadership.

"At school [where substance abuse prevention is also taught], they're shoving stuff in your face ... Read this, read that ... and asking you questions," comments one PEERsuader. "Here, it keeps you thinking on group problems. When you get in a problem you'll know how to handle it." Another PEERsuader agrees: "We'd know what to do if someone comes up to us [urging cigarettes, alcohol, drugs]."

A particularly popular training activity is a mock party with all the trimmings: decorations, music, dancing, beverages served in fancy glasses. Each girl is assigned a role: urging others to drink, falling down drunk, getting belligerent or loud. Afterward, the group discusses how it felt to act out or to see various behaviors. As always, the emphasis is on making choices, not judging people who drink -- a touchy subject since most parents drink. The party, according to Strong, "helps to demystify and deglamorize drinking."

In another activity, girls design their own ad campaigns for silly products such as purple sand or used bubble-gum. This helps them recognize the techniques used to sell even useless or harmful products.

After training, PEERsuaders receive certificates but, says Strong, "we explain that, like medical students or

other apprentices, they can't use the letters 'C.F.P.' (Certified Friendly PEERsuader) after their names until they apply what they've learned."

In teams of two to four, with guidance from Girls Club staff, the PEERsuaders create lesson plans for teaching groups of up to ten PEERsuade-Mes, choosing their own topics, learning approach, and activities. These sessions usually total four to five hours and focus on decision-making and information about drugs. By November, 1988, at the end of the program's first year, 68 PEERsuaders have completed the training and have taught about 270 PEERsuade-Mes.

Celebrations at the conclusion of teaching PEERsuade-Mes are held at times convenient for working parents, in order to bring the girls' parents into the program, too. Usually the girls present short skits demonstrating what they have learned, and each receives individual recognition for her participation.

Reflecting on their work, most PEERsuaders agree that they feel good about their teaching. "The hardest thing is when you have to teach your lesson," comments one. A second quietly adds: "Another good thing is working in a group instead of taking all the credit yourself."

Friendly PEERsuasion was originally developed in the three Girls Club sites in Arlington, a city of 250,000 with all the typical urban problems, eight miles from Dallas. With funding from the federal Office for Substance Abuse Prevention of the Alcohol, Drug Abuse and Mental Health Administration, the program is now being piloted in four additional cities: Birmingham, Alabama; Clearwater, Florida; Rapid City, South Dakota; and Worcester, Massachusetts. A professional evaluation is being done by Abt Associates, a social service research firm in Cambridge, Massachusetts. After the three-year pilot period, which began in October, 1987, the program will be replicated in many of the 240 Girls Clubs throughout the country and will involve an estimated 35,000 girls.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Deborah West, Executive Director
Gail Thomas Strong, Assistant Executive Director
Girls Clubs of Arlington
600 New York Avenue
Arlington, Texas 76010
214-647-0475

PROJECT HUMANITY

Folwell Junior High School
Minneapolis, Minnesota

"They multiply my hands by 12," says special education teacher Thad Kranz of the seventh and eighth graders who work in his class as peer tutors, 12 at a time, each week. These young volunteers teach his 12-to-16-year-old TMR (trainable mentally retarded) students how to count money, tell time, read key safety words, and communicate with peers. Sometimes, amid much laughter, they play games like "Charades" to reinforce the functional concepts they're working on. Some peer tutors escort their students to lunch, helping them integrate into the mainstream of junior high school life.

Kranz began the program in 1984 with Fred McNair, since deceased, a social studies teacher. Over the program's first four years, it involved close to 300 peer tutors. Originally several of McNair's social studies classes participated each year; now roughly two dozen volunteers from throughout the school are released from class with their teachers' permission.

Kranz provides extensive training and writes weekly comments about individual tutors' work. With the help of paraprofessional Mary Ann Dalbey, he also prepares detailed lesson plans for each tutoring session. Tutors quickly learn techniques of communicating with and assessing the progress of their special students.

After the death of his colleague, Kranz looked around for a new partner and found Fresh Force, a Minneapolis youth service organization. "They give the kids more recognition than I can," says Kranz of the receptions, tee shirts, and other visibility Fresh Force provides. Despite the value of this, Kranz points out, some aspects of the program worked better under the old system. Timely reflection and follow-up were possible in McNair's social studies classes, while now Kranz is able to schedule meetings with the tutors as a group only two or three times a year.

Benefits to both tutors and TMR students far outweigh any disadvantages, however. Research documenting that handicapped students learn better from their peers is substantiated by this program, according to Kranz. In addition, his students, usually isolated from the rest of

the school, have chances to interact with peers and make friends to talk with in the halls. Tutors, many of whom are not academic "stars," gain confidence and self-respect, as well as public recognition, from doing something needed and valued.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Thad Kranz
Project Humanity
Folwell Junior High School
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VALUED YOUTH PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

Center for the Prevention and Recovery of Dropouts
Intercultural Development Research Association
San Antonio, Texas

About 100 dropout-prone students participate in the Valued Youth Partnership Program each year. Half are from middle schools and half from high schools in the Harlandale and South San Antonio school districts. Participating students tutor elementary schoolchildren, at minimum wage, for five to eight hours per week. They are trained in an accredited school course, which also aims to improve their basic academic skills. "Tutoring helps me come to school because I have to come and teach the kids," says one program participant.

The program also involves field trips for tutors and their elementary students and presentations by community role models: minority business and government leaders. "A salient feature of the program is that it provides an opportunity for them [the tutors] to try out new behaviors in new settings," says Alicia Sosa, program coordinator.

Teacher coordinators from each participating school receive intensive inservice training every year from the Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA), the program's developer.

The program, which began in 1984 with funding from Coca Cola USA, targets high risk students with pressing financial needs, underachievement in basic skills, poor or deteriorating self-esteem, high absentee rates, and disciplinary problems. Most are from low-income families, and nearly all are Hispanic. "Most dropout prevention programs tend to be deficit-oriented. They say, 'There's something wrong with you; we're going to fix you,'" says Sosa. "We do the opposite. We say, 'You have something to offer; you are valuable.' The Valued Youth Partnership emphasis is on enrichment."

IDRA, a non-profit research and education organization, carries out extensive monitoring and evaluation of the program. Among its findings for middle school students have been improved school attitudes and behavior. "This program has helped me," says one participant. "I used to be flunking all my subjects. Now I'm getting Bs."

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Peer Counseling Programs

PEER COUNSELING PROGRAM

McChesney Junior High School
Oakland, California

> A commitment to peer counseling underlies our commitment to the education of the total person.
> --Ed Lamb and Ron Rosenbaum, Peer Counseling: A Viable Approach to Teen Issues

For ten years, McChesney Junior High School in Oakland, California, has operated a PEER COUNSELING PROGRAM in which trained ninth graders counsel fellow students, grades seven through nine. "When struggling with their sense of confusion, loneliness, or alienation, who do these young people turn to? ... [M]ost turn to their own peer groups. Using this obvious resource in a productive and effective manner is the key to peer counseling," write program developers Ron Rosenbaum, guidance counselor at McChesney, and Ed Lamb, facilitator of Project Success (a system-wide independent study and counseling program for at-risk youth).

Three counselors-in-training -- ninth graders who have completed three of ten training sessions required to become peer counselors -- reflect on the program and why they joined it. They personify Oakland's multi-ethnic population.

> "I saw some of the ninth graders who were peer counselors [last year] talking to kids and helping," says the first. "It looked like a good feeling."
>
> "I always wanted to help people," agrees another. "And after seeing one [peer counselor] talking with kids, I just decided that's something I want to do. I had a friend who was a counselor last year."
>
> "I guess you want to help people," adds the third, "to make someone feel better."

Students who apply to the program attend four preliminary training/orientation sessions in the spring of eighth grade. Lamb and Rosenbaum then interview them and select those who will continue the training. About 38

students participated in the spring, 1988, pre-training; some 17 were selected to continue. Over the ten years of the program's existence, applications per year have varied from about 30 to more than 100 students.

Lamb comments that peer counselors are not by any means the "stars" in the school. "In fact, the program often places kids with problems in the peer counselor role, at least in part to help them gain insights into their own situations and to give them coping skills," he notes.

The peer counselors meet with Lamb and/or Rosenbaum every Wednesday on a rotating schedule (first period one week, second period the next, and so forth) so that no class is missed more than once every five or six weeks. When training is complete, they continue meeting to process what they have done, discuss referrals, look at alternate ways to solve problems, and so forth. "People think peer counselors can handle everything," comments one youngster. "It's not so. You can present a problem at the meeting and get advice."

Training sessions stress communication (verbal and non-verbal), listening, and questioning skills through role playing, simulation exercises, group discussion, and other activities. Counselors learn how to help peers define their issues and come up with solutions themselves. "The problem they bring you might not be the real problem," one points out. "Like they might say it's a problem with the peer group, but really there are problems at home or maybe it's something they're doing themselves. When people are having problems, they don't usually think they're at fault."

"And like when they're not making sense -- blabbering a lot -- we learn to reflect back what they've said to help them make sense," adds another. "It's also a way to show them you're really listening."

After they complete the training, these peer counselors will visit homerooms throughout the school, in pairs, to introduce themselves and describe the kind of support they offer. "We don't give advice," stresses one of the counselors-in-training. "I used to give a lot of advice. Now I make a question and get them to understand the problem and find an answer." This, according to Lamb, is a key to successful peer counseling.

Another rule emphasized by these youngsters is confidentiality, for training and counseling sessions alike. Whatever goes on stays "in the room."

"It's hard enough to talk with someone," one of them says. "Promising confidentiality makes them more secure."

Another agrees: "If you don't assure them it's confidential, they won't be as open."

There are exceptions to the confidentiality rule, however, Ed Lamb reminds them: when a student mentions suicide, child abuse, or threats of any kind. Peer counselors are trained to explain to such students that they are obligated to share this information with an adult. School staff, in turn, decide how to handle each problem and may refer the student to outside professionals.

The Peer Counseling Program is slated to expand, through Project Success, to eight additional schools in the Oakland school system: two high schools and six junior high schools. Lamb has found that the program transfers most easily to a new school when the trainer is a teacher from that school who already has a good rapport with students; using an outside trainer does not work as well.

The program's effects are dramatic among the counselors. "The meetings help us solve our own problems," says one who has not even completed the training. Another adds: "When there's a problem now -- my own or someone else's -- I ask myself, 'Is this the <u>real</u> problem?' From learning the techniques, it's easier for me to solve my own problems."

"Once you start taking these sessions, you use them in everyday life," agrees the third. "When it comes to making decisions, I already use what I've learned in Peer Counseling. I've started to think differently about the effects of my decisions."

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PEER COUNSELORS

Stonybrook Junior High School
Indianapolis, Indiana

For two years, as part of a schoolwide effort to offer students many kinds of support, selected eighth and ninth graders counseled their peers in this Indianapolis junior high school. "The first year, we had mostly honor roll students," says Debby Hinderliter, program director and the school's guidance supervisor. "The second year, we chose more average kids, and about four of them really blossomed. They developed new attitudes toward school and more self confidence."

Peer counselors were chosen on the basis of teacher recommendations, essays, and interest. Ten hours of training, mostly exercises and role playing, helped them learn to listen, pick up body language clues, and draw out their peers. Ongoing biweekly meetings with Hinderliter, their trainer, gave youngsters time to share experiences, discuss problems, and refine their skills. The hardest thing for them, according to Hinderliter, was learning not to give advice. So they practiced helping "clients" brainstorm and see the consequences of their own solutions.

Tee shirts, PA announcements, buttons, homeroom and PTA meeting visits were among the publicity techniques devised by the first-year counselors to attract clients. By the second year, the program had sold itself, and students were eager to meet with peer counselors.

Sometimes too eager, says Hinderliter, who met first with each potential client. After talking a bit to determine the nature of their concerns, she matched each with an appropriate peer counselor. Sometimes students didn't really have problems; they were curious, wanted to get out of class, or wanted to meet a particular counselor. Other times problems were too serious for the peer counselors. In either case, Hinderliter let counselors come to their own conclusions, although she kept a careful eye on the more serious problems. "The counselors always let me know when they couldn't handle it," she says. "And they were real good, too, about saying it wasn't a real problem."

Scheduling conflicts eliminated the program in 1988-89, when the "activity period," used for training, meetings, and counseling, was eliminated. "I haven't given up," says

Hinderliter, who doesn't want to pull counselors out of regular classes. "The program is just 'on hold' for now."

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PEER COUNSELING

Palo Alto, California

"This program could just as accurately be called Peer Helping," says Dr. Pam Toole, who coordinates Palo Alto's 18-year-old middle and high school PEER COUNSELING program. The target student for middle school peer counselors, according to Toole, is "the student who goes unnoticed," and the goal is "to help him/her establish some one-to-one relationships."

The program tries to get a cross-section of students as peer counselors, some with leadership potential, some very needy. "It's easy to take your successful kids, but if you don't make it work with minority and high-risk kids, you're missing the mark," is the philosophy of Dr. Mary Bacon, Palo Alto's Director of Special Services. To get the right mix, Toole and her colleagues issue individual invitations -- often to negative leaders, newcomers, or shy kids -- as well as visiting all seventh and eighth grade classes.

Some 60-100 middle school students participate in after-school training to become peer counselors. They meet in groups of eight to ten, an hour and a half a week, for 15 sessions of activity-based training. The curriculum was developed by Dr. Barbara Varenhorst, Consulting Psychologist (and, with colleague Dr. Beatrix Hamburg, the program's original developer). It covers such topics as questioning, listening, non-verbal communication, confidentiality, and specific adolescent concerns about the family, drugs, sex, and death. After training, students meet weekly for problem-solving and continued training.

Another 25 students enroll in an elective course during the school day. The course, according to Toole, doesn't work as well for training because the group is larger and each session is shorter. In addition, the program has little control over who enrolls in or teaches the course.

All after-school group leaders, mostly teachers but sometimes college volunteers or interns, are themselves carefully trained. "The single most important factor is who runs the groups," asserts Toole. "We need training with <u>heart</u> as well as techniques. Even if people are qualified and have a manual, peer helping is not just a curriculum, it's a way of life."

Staff training is a regular in-service offering in the district, usually scheduled three times a year. It is offered to all adults in the school, whether or not they participate in the program, and to parents as well. "The more people support your program and understand its intent, the more chance [you have] of success," Toole points out. She estimates that a quarter to a third of the middle school staff has been through this training.

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Peer Mediation

RESOLVING CONFLICT CREATIVELY

Community School District 15
Brooklyn, New York

"He kicked the ball right in my face!" claims a fourth-grade girl, angrily, about her classmate.

"She's bothering me," says a sixth grader, loudly rejecting the attentions of his more physically mature classmate.

Typical playground conflicts, these. Noisy, energetic clusters of upper elementary students on a blacktopped Brooklyn public school playground, letting off steam after lunch. Conflicts seem inevitable.

But on this warm November day, while the sun loses its battle with low gray clouds, the playground disputes go no further. Turquoise-tee-shirted fifth and sixth grade student mediators step in. "Would you like to try mediation?" they ask. Working in pairs, they follow a carefully structured format to help their peers identify the sources of conflict, come up with alternative solutions, and decide upon one of them. The sessions end, as they usually do, with "Sorry" and a handshake.

These young mediators, and many of their fellow students at PS 261 in Brooklyn's Community School District 15, are participants in the RESOLVING CONFLICT CREATIVELY PROGRAM. Teachers at this and nine other district schools have chosen to participate and have received extensive after-school training. Classroom lessons on peace, aggression, prejudice, anger, cooperation, equality, and other related topics guide students from kindergarten through grade six to think about conflict and its resolution in new ways.

The mediation component of the program varies from school to school. In some cases, teachers add mediation to their classroom lessons and assign students on a rotating basis as mediators for classroom disputes. In others, students are drawn from several participating classes. Selection methods vary also, but always involve both peers and teachers and always aim for students who reflect the

entire school population. Students usually begin as mediators in fifth grade -- although one school has used fourth graders -- and continue for two years, helping to train the next group.

The PS 261 mediators, about 20 in all, are from several participating fifth and sixth grade classes. Four of them are on duty during and after lunch every day. They represent a cross-section of school achievement and behavior. One comes from a special education class, and others have a history of conflict.

The youngsters are pulled out of their regular classes for 20 hours of training. They learn and practice active listening, paraphrasing, discovering the underlying needs and feelings of disputants, and brainstorming solutions. Inventing conflicts to practice with, they play the roles of disputant and mediator, analyzing their resolutions with fellow mediators-in-training. Once they begin, the mediators continue to meet regularly as a group for additional training, problem-solving, and reflection.

"How's it going?" asks Roberta Kirshbaum, their adult group leader and PS 261's assistant principal, that November day just before lunch. Sitting on the floor in a temporarily vacated classroom, students comment eagerly, touching on everything from the difficulties of being pulled out of class to problems with their assigned partners, from specific difficult mediations to being put on the spot in their own classrooms.

"What makes a good resolution," is the topic of the day. "That's when the problem is solved," says one young mediator. "One time the disputants didn't finish solving it. They wanted to, but they didn't. They could have said, 'Sorry,' but I knew the problem was still there." "Great!" says Kirshbaum. "You knew it wasn't a good resolution because it wouldn't prevent the problem from happening again." Nods greet her statement around the room.

With Kirshbaum's help, students come up with a description of good resolutions. Then they try out the formula. Four role play the mediation of an actual recent conflict: two boys fighting after one wasn't allowed to join a game already in progress on the playground. The mediators struggle to resolve this fairly, recognizing the near impossibility of making both disputants happy. "Sometimes it's not possible for another person to play," points out Kirshbaum, who also supervises their lunchtime mediations. The students shake their heads, trying to figure out how to prevent the same conflict from arising again.

"We've focused on problems today," concludes Kirshbaum, "but I want you to know what a nice job you're doing. Not one conflict you've mediated has come up again with the same people. The mood during lunch is so much better. It's really working!"

A professional evaluation of the program as a whole by Metis Associates, Inc., concurs with this assessment. The evaluators reported finding positive effects on students, teachers, class climate, and school climate. Among students, for example, some of the effects they found were less physical violence, fewer verbal put-downs, more supportive comments, spontaneous use of conflict resolution skills, increased self-esteem, and more acceptance of differences. Among teachers, some findings were improved listening skills, increased understanding of children, more use of conflict resolution techniques in their classrooms and personal lives, and increased self-esteem.

The Resolving Conflict Creatively Program has been operating in District 15 since the spring of 1985. From an initial group of about 20 teachers in three schools, the program there has grown to roughly 100 teachers in 10 schools, involving an estimated 3,000 students.

This program in District 15, according to Metis Associates, "represents the first time that a large urban school district in the United States has made a solid commitment to integrate conflict resolution concepts and intercultural understanding into its curriculum and is backing up that commitment with substantial support for staff development."

The program operates only in schools where the principal is actively supportive. Official notices are posted in the school, letting teachers know about the program and the after-school training, for which they are paid. Teachers who wish to join the program complete applications which are reviewed by the principal and program staff.

According to Arthur Foresta, principal of PS 261, teachers' reasons for applying range from the global to the specific. "I have the sense that many of them are dissatisfied with how they deal with conflict in their classrooms," he says. "They recognize that they <u>stop</u> it but don't really <u>resolve</u> it. It comes out again later: after school or the next day. What's really exciting about this program is that the adults begin to realize they have to act in certain ways. They have to model the principles they're teaching."

The program is co-sponsored by the central New York City Board of Education (Office of Health, Physical Education, and Substance Abuse) and the Metropolitan Area chapter of Educators for Social Responsibility (ESR). In 1985, Foresta was District 15's Director of Special Projects. Concerned about conflict and violence in children's lives, he brought together Linda Lantieri from the Board of Education and Tom Roderick from New York ESR. The three of them developed a pilot program that spring, training the initial group of teachers, providing them with a set of resource books, and visiting their classrooms to help.

From the beginning, teachers have been active partners in curriculum development, assessing what worked, suggesting changes, and trying out new strategies. The draft curriculum guide, nearly 300 pages long, has been very much shaped by this teacher input, according to Roderick.

Recently, the Resolving Conflict Creatively Program has expanded in New York City to four additional school districts and to the citywide special education programs for severely handicapped youngsters. Roughly 250 teachers from 40 schools are or soon will be teaching peace and conflict resolution concepts to close to 9,000 students. In addition, small groups of teachers from the public schools in Little Rock, Arkansas, and Anchorage, Alaska, are being trained to use the program's curriculum.

The biggest difficulty has been funding, needed primarily to cover teacher stipends for after-school training and to hire consultants to work with teachers in their classrooms (10-12 visits per teacher). In the 1987-88 school year, the budget exceeded $150,000 for District 15 alone. ESR has raised about half the funds needed each year from foundations, corporations, state agencies, and other sources. The Board of Education and participating districts have been responsible for the rest. Within three to five years, it is expected that each district will take over responsibility for funding and hire its own full-time coordinator.

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Partnerships

THE JONES-VILLAGE PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

Jones Middle School
First Community Village
Upper Arlington, Ohio

> I don't know exactly how I've changed, but I can feel it inside of me. It's like a brand new doorway has been opened. You could say it has "broadened my horizons," but somehow this doesn't capture the real meaning. The people here are so wonderful, so beautiful, that they have had a deep impact on me.
>
> This program has really made a difference in my life. It is something really different, I mean it's not like getting 100% on a test or having someone tell you that you look nice today. It's a deeper, more important feeling that I've gained. Maybe it has to do with inspiration and knowing what I can make of my life if I just keep trying like these people have.
>
> --excerpts from student journals

The students quoted above, both 14 year olds, are writing about their experiences in the JONES-VILLAGE PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM, a service learning project which pairs eighth graders from Jones Middle School with residents at First Community Village, a nearby retirement village. For six weeks each year since 1979, in the spring, about 30 students have spent two periods a day at the Village, participating in structured and informal, educational and recreational activities with individual senior citizens.

Both students and seniors get something out of the partnerships. Students work on improving their communication skills and learn about the aging process. Participating seniors make new connections with the young by sharing their knowledge and experiences. In the process, mutual stereotypes are dispelled: of the elderly as feeble and passive, of young adolescents as self-centered and difficult. "Before this, I didn't really know that older people had so much to offer us," comments one youngster. Another adds: "I liked the idea of my partner being busier than I was."

Built into the program are many opportunities for students to reflect on (and learn from) their experiences: individual journals; daily group discussions; taped oral history interviews with seniors; simulations of disabilities common among the elderly; seminars, films, and readings on aging and communication; and more. "This [reflection] took away a lot of my fear of old people," says one student.

Parents are encouraged to participate in the program, too, by visiting the Village with their children and attending the final party held each year. Sometimes a resident "adopts" a student or family, and the relationship continues.

This program is but one of many middle school partnerships sponsored by the school system in Upper Arlington, Ohio, a mostly white, middle- and upper-middle-class community near Columbus. A similar intergenerational program involves Hastings Middle School and Westminster-Thurber Community, another retirement village. Additional partnerships have included: a pen-pal relationship between a learning disabled class and St. Raphael's, a 78-bed nursing home; regular service by an eighth-grade history class at a shelter for the homeless in Columbus; and a pairing of foreign language students with the wives of foreign students at Ohio State University. In the latter, the foreign wives "learned about kids -- that they were not as self-centered as they previously thought," comments one of the young partners.

These partnership programs are only part of Upper Arlington's intertwined system of service learning and school-community relationships, from kindergarten through grade 12, under the sponsorship of career education. Students at all levels have opportunities to learn new skills by helping others, in supervised school or community settings, and to explore their own career goals. "Projects [like the Jones-Village Partnership] make kids think about their world," says Jones Middle School's assistant principal.

"Partnerships make work tangible," points out Ellen Erlanger, Upper Arlington's Director of Career Education, who began the Jones-Village Partnership in 1979 with her eighth-grade American History class. "People talk with students about the skills needed for various jobs."

"We need good people in this field," adds the First Community Village director, who welcomes the program. He makes sure students are exposed to jobs involving a variety of helping roles with the 450 Village residents, who live in well-kept independent or semi-independent apartments.

Health care is also available at the Village through a clinic and health-care facility.

Many students apply to participate in the Jones-Village Partnership Program each year. Most are selected by lottery, although a few are accepted because of needs identified by their teachers. Students and residents (who also apply) are carefully matched with one another. A student who needs to be drawn out, for example, will be paired with a senior who has that ability. Other pairs are matched by common interests. "No two [students] are alike," observes Nelle Gardner, a 98-year-old retired social worker who has participated in the program since it began. "You could no more prepare for this than fly. There are just as many points of view as there are children."

Program evaluations since 1979, based on several pre- and post-tests and comparisons with control groups, have shown significant changes among student participants in self-concept, communication skills, and attitudes toward aging and the elderly. "I started out unsure of elderly people,/ But as I look now I see beautiful people," wrote one student, inspired by her partner's poem to her. "They're joyous and a pleasure to be with,/ And now each old stereotype is only a myth."

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WAVES: PEOPLE AND CULTURE ON THE LOWER EAST SIDE

ARTS, Inc. (Art Resources for Teachers and Students)
New York City

> We are studying many things about our neighborhood -- Chinatown and the Lower East Side -- because it is an old, interesting and important part of New York. We are trying to learn where the people come from, what jobs they do, what food they eat, and what kinds of celebrations they enjoy. We want to know what people remember about the past and how they live today.
>
> This project is called "Waves: People and Culture on the Lower East Side." Its purpose is to teach children about our community and to make exhibits and publications about its interesting history and people. Children from elementary and parochial schools are doing this project, asking people questions, taking photographs, making drawings and collecting things.
>
> --student description of project

From 1984 to 1987, 10-to-17-year-old researchers speaking English, Spanish, and several dialects of Chinese fanned out through the Lower East Side of New York City from their storefront base at ARTS, Inc. Using cameras and clipboards, they mapped their neighborhoods, interviewed shopkeepers, drew the interiors of their apartments, inventoried the produce at local markets, compared Hispanic and Chinese household altars and methods of cooking rice, collected samples of anything interesting and portable, and more.

Sponsor of this folklife research project was ARTS, Inc., a local cultural resource and teaching center founded by two artists in 1970. Five staff members each worked, twice a week after school, with a group including one high school student and five or six younger students. Once a week, the adults and high school students met alone to review, plan, and consult periodically with expert folklorists and anthropologists. Over three years, roughly 250 students were involved on a regular basis, some for a greater length of time than others.

Topics and sites were planned by the project director and group leaders. Within this framework, each group chose its focus. "This framework has to be set very carefully,"

says Mary Scherbatskoy, director of the project and co-founder of ARTS. "This is college-level social science research."

Three major New York area exhibits of "Waves" were seen by more than 75,000 people. A selection from these exhibits was shown at the Smithsonian Festival of American Folklife in Washington, DC, in 1987, and a multi-volume publication is planned for 1990.

Funding for the project was provided by the National Endowment for the Humanities, Hazen Foundation, New York State Council for the Arts, Consolidated Edison, National Endowment for the Arts, and private donors. Exhibition funding was provided by the New York Council for the Humanities and the Institute of Museum Services.

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MAGIC ME

Baltimore, Maryland

Magic Me, run by a non-profit organization of the same name, pairs 11 to 14 year olds with residents of nursing homes in what it calls "imaginative community service." The young people spend an hour a week, during the school day, with their partners, writing poetry, playing basketball, dancing to disco music. If needed, they adapt these activities for chair-bound elderly: making basketball hoops with their arms, dancing by waving their arms. Sometimes they take trips to the theater or ballpark or host parties. The point, according to founder Kathy Levin, is to "get beyond the wrinkles and tears," making friends and recognizing their common humanity.

More than 500 youngsters participated during 1987-88 from 12 Baltimore area schools, nine public and three private. Although these young people came from a variety of backgrounds, the program takes particular interest in those who have been identified as potential dropouts or behavior problems. In 1987-88, about 70 percent of the participants were black inner-city students; about 40 percent were boys.

Five full-time Magic Me staff members provide about four hours of training and supervise all visits to the nursing homes. They also meet monthly with the students at their schools to discuss any problems, address issues such as aging and dying, and work on communication skills.

Magic Me's annual budget, provided by two community foundations, is roughly $250 per student. This covers staff salaries, transportation, student tee shirts, and supplies.

Founded in Baltimore in 1981, Magic Me programs now operate in California, Florida, Iowa, Kansas, Maryland, Massachusetts, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, and Tennessee as well as Great Britain and France.

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Multiple Service Programs

THE EARLY ADOLESCENT HELPER PROGRAM

New York City

Being a Helper means...

...Bringing joy to a lonely kid.

...Learning how to deal with older people and how to understand their lifestyles, hopes, dreams, and values.

...Helping kids with their problems and their homework.

...To be responsible, to understand, and to help out.

--Statements by Helpers at the June 1988 Helper Convention

Close to 200 junior high and middle school Helpers from 14 public schools in New York City, two in Bridgeport, Connecticut, one in Phoenix, Arizona, and another in Montrose, New York, are participants in the EARLY ADOLESCENT HELPER PROGRAM. Now in its seventh year of operation, the network of Helper Programs branches out from a modest office at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York (CUNY). Under the auspices of CUNY's Center for Advanced Study in Education, this office provides materials, training, technical assistance, help with evaluation, conferences, yearly Helper conventions, and plain old-fashioned advice and hand-holding to schools in the network.

Helpers perform three kinds of services: 1) child care, working in day care centers and other preschool settings; 2) latchkey, working in tutoring centers and other afterschool school-age child care settings; and 3) partnerships with senior citizens. (Examples of each, described as they work at particular schools, are provided later in this case study.)

Despite the varied services and settings, several elements are the same in all Helper Programs. Helpers receive extensive training, using program-developed training guides; "activity" or "discovery" learning is the watchword

of these curricula. Simulation exercises, role playing, open-ended discussions, writing in journals are some of the activities through which the young Helpers explore the responsibilities of their new roles and the special characteristics of the population with whom they will work. The weekly group meetings or seminars continue after Helpers are placed at their work sites; ongoing training and reflection enable them to solve problems and process their experiences.

At each school, a staff member -- usually a teacher but sometimes a counselor or administrator -- takes responsibility for coordinating the program. He or she runs the training and reflection sessions, locates placement sites, arranges scheduling and transportation if needed, finds an on-site supervisor, coordinates with on-site staff, and generally acts as point-person and trouble-shooter.

Each school manages program details in the way that suits its individual needs and constraints. "This independence is encouraged," says Alice Angell, the program's assistant director. In most schools, for example, Helpers meet for training and reflection during their lunch periods. In some cases, however, the seminar is a regularly scheduled class -- the ideal scenario, since, as Angell points out, "The activities are definitely related to the [school] curriculum; the guides and journals can be easily incorporated into language arts, social studies, and other subjects."

Sometimes Helpers work after school at their placement sites; sometimes their work is part of the school day. Their hours vary, too, generally in the range of one to four hours per week at the site. In some schools, the teacher acting as program leader is paid a little extra, but more often he or she is a volunteer, adding these responsibilities to an already full schedule.

Recruitment and selection of Helpers vary from school to school, too. Some are chosen in order to motivate them to stay in school; others as recognition for superior performance. Some Helpers volunteer, while others are required to participate. The result across schools is a broad range of academic, socioeconomic, and ethnic backgrounds. The only common recruitment difficulty has been attracting males to become Helpers.

The Helper Program grew out of an earlier pilot project initiated by the National Commission on Resources for Youth (NCRY) in 1982. In 1983, when NCRY's funding ended, the program moved to CUNY's Center for Advanced Study in Education. With support from a number of private

foundations, the program has expanded gradually each year since then, following director Joan Schine's philosophy that "You start small and do something really well before you try to grow."

The costs to each school of running the Helper Program are negligible.

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CHILD CARE HELPERS

IS 139, Alexander Burger School
Bronx, New York

One of the first schools in the Helper network, IS 139 also has one of the most stable and successful programs. Since 1982 nine to twelve Helpers a year have been placed at the South Bronx Head Start program, an easy two-block walk from school. They usually work there once a week for the last period of the school day. Many stay longer than required, and some have stayed in touch for years after completing the program. "I now depend on the Helpers to be a part of my program," says Estella Campbell, director of the Head Start Program. At least three students have gone on to the Summer Youth Employment Program with Campbell as a reference.

In the school, guidance counselor Fanny Herskowitz has been program leader since the beginning. At first she selected Helpers she knew would succeed; now she encourages less successful students to participate too because she believes the experience will "give them a boost."

Helpers are pulled out of class for weekly seminars with Herskowitz. Scheduling these sessions is difficult, for she tries not to conflict with major subject classes for any student. Herskowitz knows each Helper well, and helps them set individual goals. She encourages them to elaborate on problems and successes in the seminars and in their weekly logs. In a safe and supportive atmosphere, she

believes, they are able to discuss important issues and grow in self awareness. End-of-the-year questionnaires point to enhanced self-esteem and confidence.

Initially, some Helpers found they were given unimportant "busy work" by their supervisors, classroom teachers at the center; this is no longer the case. Close and frequent communication between Herskowitz and Campbell allows them to nip potential problems like this in the bud.

IS 139 is located in the midst of the urban devastation associated with the South Bronx. Helpers are mostly Hispanic, mostly poor, and mostly female; all are eighth graders. The program supports the broad goals of the school, according to Assistant Principal Walter Kurtzman: to help students learn to recognize problems, determine alternative solutions, and take thoughtful steps toward resolution. In addition, he says, basic skills are reinforced and students develop a new sense of efficacy.

A formal evaluation funded by the Bruner Foundation looked at the nature of the relationship between Helpers and young children. It found that the Helpers became a special kind of friend to the children and that the children looked forward to their presence each week. (See page 62 in Chapter 4 for more details.)

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LATCHKEY HELPERS

Park School
Phoenix, Arizona

Park School, a cluster of one-story buildings interspersed with plantings unfamiliar to the Northeasterner's eye, with a dusting of sand over all, is a temporary combination of upper and lower schools to accommodate a building and renovation program. Now in its third year, a Latchkey Helper Program provides real support for the adult staff of "Madison Adventure Clubs," an after-school program held at the school for kindergarten through

fourth-grade students from throughout the district. Eleven Helpers, volunteers from fifth through eighth grade classes, help with homework, teach new games, read stories, and, at their own suggestion, lead drama and gymnastics activities.

The Helpers meet weekly at the end of the middle school day for seminars led by Michelle Keso, program leader and after-school coordinator. An early seminar involved Helpers in a lively discussion of appropriate discipline. As they debated techniques for resolving conflict -- "time out" versus a change of activity -- several eagerly offered examples of their own success with separating combatants and finding new activities to capture their interest rather than lecturing to them.

"Helpers showed enthusiasm for the program from the beginning and quickly settled into their work assignments," wrote Susan O. Daniels, the original program leader, in a 1987 issue of the Helper Program newsletter. "Attendance was regular, they assumed their work roles with seriousness, and acted without exception in a totally professional manner ... One male student reversed a pattern of discipline problems over the course of the semester in which he was a Helper. His teachers and principal credit this program for his more responsible and respectful behavior."

A year of planning preceded the start of Park School's Latchkey Helper Program in the fall of 1986. Dr. Paul Koehler, then the district's Assistant Superintendent for Instructional Services and now Arizona Deputy Commissioner of Education, worked with other district staff, school administrators, members of the Arizona State University education faculty, and the Helper Program office to set up the program as part of the school district's efforts to respond to the needs of its working parents.

"The real value of the Early Adolescent Helper Program," Koehler wrote at the start of their planning process, "is that it can be designed to meet our needs." Park School, with a large minority student population, half of whom live in single-parent families, and with an annual 33 percent student turnover rate, has needs similar in many ways to those of other urban schools. Some needs, however, are quite different from those of New York City schools, where the Helper Program originated. Park School's largest minority group is Native Americans, many of whom return to the reservation in the summer and thus "live in two cultures," as Marge Smith, principal of the lower school, points out. In addition, Phoenix has had uninterrupted growth in its school population, unlike schools in the Northeast.

The Helper Program at Park School is well established and bears the unique stamp of the community's needs as well as a schedule that accommodates three different dismissal times for the age groups served in the after-school program. Plans are under way to include Latchkey Helpers as part of after-school programs that will be initiated in other schools in the district. As this happens, the district is also considering integrating the Helper seminars into the home economics program, required of all eighth graders.

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"PARTNERS"
THE INTERGENERATIONAL HELPER PROGRAM

Columbus Academy
IS 44
New York City

Roughly 25 seventh graders from Columbus Academy, a middle school on Manhattan's Upper West Side, meet weekly with senior citizens at Hamilton House, a few blocks from school. As part of their social studies classes, the students research and record oral histories. Through this process, thirteen year olds and sixty-plus year olds work side by side, overcoming fears and stereotypes, getting to know each other as individuals. Comments from student journals amply demonstrate new attitudes among the Helpers:

> At first the feeling was kind of scary ... Now I think I feel more secure ... with these seniors at Hamilton House. What I hear from adults is that we make the seniors really happy and I'm glad.
>
> Every week when we go to Hamilton House we enjoy seeing the seniors. The seniors' faces light up when they see us coming.
>
> Once the program began, I learned that all people are different and that it is not fair to develop stereotypes of people young or old.

In school, students meet with program leader Esther Forrest, role-playing, planning, problem-solving. As part

of the training, they watch and critique television interviews. Forrest notes that oral histories not only make history come alive, but give purpose to learning communication skills. "You have to learn to be a listener if you're going to have the next question ready to ask," she says.

"We had a lot of problems getting the program off the ground," says Forrest, listing examples like scheduling conflicts and the difficulties of recruiting seniors during the first year, when students and seniors attended art classes together. Problems have been worked out in weekly conversations with Arnold Weintraub, director of Hamilton House, and the program runs smoothly in this, its second year.

Forrest also points to the "positive intangibles" -- the look on a senior's or a student's face -- that make the program worthwhile. An important goal in setting up the program was to build a better connection between students and the community and this, she feels, has been accomplished.

One group of Helpers participates during each of the school's ten-week trimesters, adding up to a total of about 70 Helpers for the year. Since Columbus Academy is an "option" school (school of choice), with students applying from throughout the district, its population is not typical of New York City junior highs. Helpers are a cross-section of the school: about half are minority, most are middle class, and their academic backgrounds are very mixed. The school opened its doors in the fall of 1986; the Helper Program began there the following fall.

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HELPER EVALUATORS

Eleven Helpers from four New York City schools in the Helper network became student evaluators in the spring of 1988. Chosen by their program leaders, these sixth, seventh, and eighth graders worked closely with and were trained and guided by Dr. Patricia Campbell, the Helper Program's evaluation consultant, and Assistant Director Alice Angell.

The goal of this project, which the Helper staff hopes will become part of many more school programs, was to collect information about the program from the perspectives of the Helpers and their "clients."

In a two-hour training session, the Helpers learned what evaluation is and discussed aspects of the Helper Program they might want to find out about. They then designed interviews to use with other Helpers, with staff at their placement sites (day care centers, afterschool programs, and senior citizen centers), and with children and seniors at these sites.

A month later, the Helper-Evaluators met to discuss the results of their interviews and to generate a series of conclusions and recommendations about the Helper Program. Campbell and Angell wrote a report based on this meeting, circulated it to the Helpers involved, and revised it based on their comments.

"The Helpers/Student Evaluators are very positive about the program and find, in general, others are as well," states their report. Major issues they commented on include Senior/Helper relationships and discipline problems with children. They recommend more time at placement sites, improved Senior/Helper communication, more Senior/Helper cooperative projects, and more discussions (in seminars and at placement sites) about how to deal with misbehaving children.

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COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAM

Shoreham-Wading River Middle School
Shoreham, New York

> [Students at Shoreham-Wading River Middle School] learn to care for others, outgrow pity and appreciate the insights of the infirm or the handicapped, tap the experiences of people different from themselves, and perform essential duties for which they are held accountable. People truly depend on them. The students perform real work and, as their journals indicate, conclude that they are valuable.
>
> --Joan Lipsitz, Successful Schools for Young Adolescents

Shoreham-Wading River Middle School's extraordinary schoolwide COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAM has been a pioneer among middle schools in the nation. From modest beginnings in one class in 1973, community service has grown to become an integral part of the education of every one of the school's approximately 500 sixth through eighth graders.

An important goal of the program is to enable these students, nearly all white, from working or middle-class families, to make connections with people different from themselves. Students work with young children, children with handicaps, and the elderly, provided needed and valued service as well as forming new relationships. "Until it actually occurs, no one can picture it [community service by young adolescents]," says Joanne Urgese, program coordinator. "Then after six or eight site visits, they greet the group with a big smile."

Most community service projects are part of eight to ten week units of study by one class or a team of two classes. Many students and teachers, in addition, participate in shorter-term projects such as hosting preschool children at the school and its adjoining farm or teaching adults computer basics at the school's computer lab.

In all projects, students learn both caring skills and responsibility, taking on roles usually reserved for older teens or adults. "It just makes me feel older than I really am to take over responsibilities," says one former participant. "This is the very first time I have been able to prove what I can do."

Much classroom work accompanies the ongoing projects. With their regular teacher, students learn about the population with whom they will work, receive training and orientation for the roles they will play, plan and assess sessions at the field sites. Sometimes the whole class works at the same site; sometimes they are placed at a number of sites. Individual journals and other writing as well as group discussions after each site visit help students reflect on their experiences.

Classes participate by choice of their teachers, who also select the service placements. "If anything, it adds to my curriculum," says one sixth-grade teacher. "Experiential learning for children at this age is paramount. A lot of what we do here [in school] does happen out in the community. They're doing reading, math in their jobs."

The program has developed an extensive resource list of films, presentations, and readings for classroom use. "Exploring Childhood," for example, materials from the Educational Development Center, helps prepare students to work with young children. "Main Street," a curriculum from the New York State Council on the Arts, prepares youngsters for working with special needs populations.

Once a week, accompanied by their teachers, students work for about an hour at their placement sites, which include local day care centers, Head Start programs, the public library, elementary schools, a school and hospital for the handicapped, special education schools, adult homes, health care facilities, and nursing homes. "When you got there," says one former participant, "there was this feeling -- they were really glad to see you!"

At the sites, these young volunteers teach lessons, lead arts and crafts activities, read stories, and conduct other planned activities. "We want our kids to run things when they get there," says Urgese. "We've backed off when they [agency staff] just hand them something to do -- just have them help with whatever's happening anyway. We want our kids to plan."

In the beginning, according to Winifred Pardo, the original director and developer of the program and now the school's administrative assistant, it was not so easy to find placements for the young volunteers. Now "they know we'll do what we say we're going to do," says Pardo with a smile. She points out that the program guarantees each participating agency a certain number of visits at a definite time each week and that this "contract" is always

met. Urgese adds: "We know our sites so well now that we know what they need from us."

Crucial to the program's success is its staff: a full-time coordinator and four teacher assistants. Working closely with teachers, they handle such necessary but time-consuming tasks as locating agencies for placements, making arrangements with agency staff, scheduling transportation on the school district's mini-vans, finding appropriate classroom materials, and so forth. They also maintain regular communication with agency staff during each project. In addition, they participate in all site visits and usually work with small groups of students. This facilitation allows the classroom teacher to focus on preparing students for the on-site work and ensures that each project goes smoothly and is useful to both the students and agencies involved.

Watching middle school students read to three- and four-year-olds at a local Head Start Program -- or making pottery with students with severe disabilities -- or singing with a group of elderly men and women -- one is struck by how seriously they take their responsibilities and how warm and responsive they are to their "clients." Their services are needed and valued, and excerpts from their journals show that students recognize this.

> I'll be the first to admit that this has been a big learning experience. I think I have just had a small glimpse of what teaching is all about ... I feel this whole thing had a bigger impact on <u>my</u> life than <u>theirs</u>.
>
> I am glad kids can see for themselves that the stereotype of "grouchy" elders is not true. As far as making a difference, the difference happened in both of us ... They carried our letters with them as if they were gold, they clapped as we arrived, and how enthusiastic they were when we started a new project ... As long as we know what we did for them, that is all I care about. I hope future students can share this feeling with us.
>
> I can remember when I was younger if I saw a retarded person I was afraid of them, but now they have become people with wants and needs to me.

"Believe in the kids!" is Pardo's advice to other schools interested in starting a community service program like this. "Kids this age can do this kind of community service," she adds, countering the misconception of young adolescents she and others have met over the years and that Shoreham's program has long laid to rest in its community.

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HUGSS PROGRAM
(HELPING US GROW THROUGH SERVICE AND SMILES)

Challenger Middle School
Colorado Springs, Colorado

All 850 sixth through eighth graders at Challenger Middle School participate in community service activities through the HUGSS Program. Each of the school's nine academic "teams" (three per grade) adopts at least one community service agency or project for the year, thus helping unite teams for this school in transition from junior high to middle school philosophy.

Some middle school students adopt grandparents from the Silver Key Association. Others visit nursing homes, using puppies from the Humane Society to bridge the generation gap. Still others act as "big buddies" to preschoolers in a local Head Start program or a school for the blind. Some focus their efforts on the hungry or the sick, working with a food pantry or hospice. And in 1987 some looked further afield, adopting a school in Malawi, Africa.

Initially, Elaine Andrus, coordinator of the program, located community agencies. Now, in addition, students are suggesting projects and roles for themselves. From the beginning, she says, agencies welcomed the idea; now, they ask for HUGSS.

HUGSS is part and parcel of the school's explicit educational mission, which emphasizes social and emotional as well as academic growth. Today's adolescents are "disconnected," says principal Donald Joiner; family structures are weakened, many students are unsupervised after school, and TV exerts a powerful influence. "Education needs to build back connections," he says, "to create an extended family concept [in school]." Challenger does this by dividing each grade into three teams, each working with a core group of academic teachers, a counselor, and an administrator.

"What we need to teach," adds Joiner, "is, one, how to be active learners, and, two, how to survive in a world we don't know and can't predict." He also feels the school must teach the social and caring skills not taught elsewhere, so that students understand the responsibilities as well as the privileges of citizenship in a democratic society.

Andrus finds parents very supportive in this largely white, middle-class community. Some have even become volunteers in their children's service projects.

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YOUTH VOLUNTEERS

New York State 4-H Clubs
and
Cornell Cooperative Extension
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Youth Volunteers, designed for 13 to 16 year olds, places youngsters in one of three types of community service: 1) in school-age child care or other after-school programs; 2) as assistant leaders in 4-H Clubs and other youth groups; and 3) in community improvement projects. Services provided by these young volunteers range from monitoring the environment to helping the elderly, from registering voters to starting a community newspaper.

Key program features include providing the young volunteers with training so that they are prepared to assume new roles and also giving them ongoing opportunities to reflect on their work. Other factors are critical for success, according to program developers: consistent and involved adult advisors for each project; youth- and community-centered purposes; and a limited time commitment (projects typically don't exceed three months).

More than 100 young volunteers, some drawn from 4-H membership, others from local schools or community groups, participated in the pilot project of Youth Volunteers, completed in early 1987. Training manuals and materials and evaluation reports were produced by the Department of Human Development and Family Studies at Cornell University. Among the participating counties were Chenango, Monroe, Niagara, Onondaga, Orange, Oswego, Rensselaer, Saratoga, Steuben, and Tompkins. Funding for program development was provided by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation.

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Leadership Development

YOUTH LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

Pyne Poynt Middle School
Camden, New Jersey

This program gives us a chance to make a change in our city -- stop drugs, clean up the city.

This program might help to do things for people outside on the street.

--comments by student participants

Pyne Poynt Middle School, in Camden, New Jersey, sits isolated by long stretches of grass from the shabby wooden row houses of the neighborhood. Broken windows, loose boards, rubble-strewn yards stand in mute contrast to the relatively well-kept brick school building. But the streets intrude: as sixth- through eighth-grade students arrive and leave every day, drug dealers are doing a lively business on the closest corners.

In the school auditorium early one afternoon at the end of November, 1988, a group of students plans an after-school tutoring program for elementary schoolchildren. They decide to call it the "After-School Achievement Program." Under the supervision of the Camden Youth Commission, it will be held after school in a local church four days a week.

Nine students volunteer to be tutors. "Parents don't have time, because they work, to give care and attention to kids," says one of the young volunteers, explaining why this program is needed.

"They'll do better in school," contributes another, helping to define the program's goals. A third youngster adds: "They'll know someone is out there who cares."

Camden, New Jersey, where these students live, is not an easy place in which to grow up. According to the United States Conference of Mayors, it has the highest rate of child poverty in the country: an estimated 61.9 percent of its children lived in poverty in 1986, and the families of nearly two out of three children receive some kind of public assistance. Violence, often drug-related, is a fact of daily life. (New York Times, 12/29/88)

Against this bleak backdrop, a new community service program is trying to help some of Pyne Poynt's more troubled young adolescents find new resources within themselves: the YOUTH LEADERSHIP PROGRAM, run by Leadership, Inc., a community leadership development agency in nearby Philadelphia. Staff from the school and the Camden Youth Commission work closely with project staff to identify, supervise, and counsel students. A teacher-coordinator and youth worker are assigned to the group. The school principal is quietly supportive, invariably greeting students personally as they arrive at group meetings.

Through community service projects designed and run by the students themselves -- like the after-school tutoring -- the program seeks to help them develop their leadership and communication skills and increase their self-esteem as well as motivate them to stay in school. During 1987-88, the program was piloted in one high school; with funding from the Pew Charitable Foundation and local corporations, it now operates in three high schools and two junior high schools. Its relatively small budget (about $126,000) covers the salaries of two full-time staff members, a half-time secretary, rent for office space, evaluation, and stipends for each teacher-coordinator.

Twenty-five Pyne Poynt Middle School students -- those meeting in the auditorium -- participate in the program: a mix of half Black and half Hispanic, half male and half female sixth through eighth graders. They have been selected because of their leadership potential and because they are among the school's "problem" students (those with records of discipline problems, poor attendance, drug use, or failing grades). According to Arthur Schwartz, the program's director and resident visionary, many of these students have been exposed firsthand to the drugs, alcohol, and violence of Camden's streets.

Unlikely leaders, these. What do they think being a leader means? Responses on a student survey are mixed:

> It means when you grow up it will make you a better person and have confidence in yourself.
>
> Be the boss.
>
> To get to know other people and have fun.
>
> I could show young children what is wrong or right. And I could teach them to do what's right.
>
> It means that I am really improving myself. Kids are looking up to me.

Their first activity in the program was a two-day retreat in early November, 1988. In an outdoor setting removed literally and symbolically from their daily lives, they explored personal and program goals and activities and participated in a variety of team-building activities. "Not everybody works well together," points out one student. "It's hard to learn to work together in two days."

The students meet for an hour twice a week in the school's auditorium or library, whichever is available, for discussions, simulations, role playing, and other activities in the program's leadership training and civic involvement curriculum. They also plan and reflect on their community service projects during these group meetings. In addition to tutoring, some are planning school improvement projects, such as cleaning up bathrooms and the lunchroom. A "Local Heroes" project is planned, in which students will research, write, edit, and publish a book about community people who are "making a difference." Eventually, community mentors will be identified to work closely with students on their projects. Students keep individual journals about their experiences. An award banquet is planned for the end of the year with the Camden mayor as keynote speaker. A professional evaluation will look at program implementation and its impact on students, teachers, and the community.

It's impossible to tell whether these young people's high hopes -- and those of the adults involved with the program -- will be even partially realized. Already one student who was at the retreat is in jail. Several students fail to return to class after group meetings on any given day. These young people are wary, cynical beyond their years, not easy to reach or help. Caring and commitment are clearly present among all the adults involved, however. If they can help some of these troubled but promising young adolescents direct their apparent energy into positive activities and achieve even small successes, the program will give a bit of hope to a community, school, and group of youth all too accustomed to failure and hopelessness.

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Chapter 4
ANALYSIS OF CASE STUDIES

The programs described in Chapter 3 are intended to be seen as models: exemplary, but not perfect. While they differ in such important features as population, services, structure, and size, nonetheless they have much in common. From Phoenix to Minneapolis to New York City, program leaders share goals, approaches, and, too often, obstacles as they work with 11 to 14 year olds in service learning projects.

Clearly, most of the young adolescents involved in these programs derive benefits from their experiences. Those benefits do not come automatically, however. The kinds of service the youngsters provide, the way they are prepared for their roles, the kinds of tasks or responsibilities they assume, and their opportunities for reflecting on their work are among the factors determining the power of the experience.

APPROPRIATE ROLES FOR EARLY ADOLESCENTS

Interpersonal Relationships

This survey bears out what most of those who have worked with young adolescents in community service, and observers of these programs, agree upon: the most meaningful roles for this age group are those involving interpersonal relationships. In virtually all of the service learning projects described in the case studies, young adolescents work with people, taking on concrete "helping" roles: tutoring younger or handicapped students, counseling their peers, mediating disputes, helping senior citizens, assisting teachers in day care centers.

Working with the very young or the aging, the young volunteers enjoy the warm welcome and affection that greet them, and at the same time their self-esteem is bolstered by the knowledge that their help is valued. Comments at the end of their projects underscore this: "I will miss the children that came up to me and jumped on me because they were happy to see me," said one young Helper from the Early Adolescent Helper Program after serving as an aide in a day care center. "Today was pretty sad," wrote a youngster from Shoreham-Wading River Middle School in her journal at the end of her visits to a nursing home. "I found myself purposely not talking to the residents so as not to become 'into it.' I was afraid to put my all in only to know it was the last visit."

A natural affinity appears to exist between young teenagers and preschool children. "I think I learned a lot about little kids and maybe even more about myself," wrote a student from Shoreham-Wading River Middle School. "From little kids I learned that they can be a lot more difficult than I thought. Each one has a different need or a different quality ... I also learned a lot about myself that I didn't know before ... I got more compassionate and understanding with the kids as the weeks went on."

Research in two sites of the Helper Program has revealed something of the nature of this relationship. Classrooms of four year olds, with and without young Helpers, were observed and videotaped over a two-year period. It was found that:

> Helpers and children develop a relationship with each other that is different from that which is developed between children and teachers. Helpers and children spend more time together in one-to-one relationships, interact more and ask for and receive more help ... In these relationships, the Helper would at times act as an adult supervising the child, but at other times act as a child, playing with a "special" friend. (Schine and Campbell, 2-3)

When young adolescents work with the elderly or disabled, they call upon different skills and learn about very different aspects of human development. But their response -- new understanding of those different from themselves and of the continuum of human life -- and their satisfaction are similar.

Concrete Value

Satisfaction and growth only happen, however, if youngsters believe their service has real value to those served. "The value of this whole experience for me is making them happy and changing their lives a bit," wrote a Shoreham volunteer. "I didn't have any regrets except I feel like a bad person because it's over. I know it sounds weird, but I feel like I stopped by for nothing, just to see those people happy for 10 weeks ... All in all I enjoyed the whole experience and I think I made a difference."

Responses from agency staff at Shoreham's placement sites confirm the importance of the volunteers' work. A letter from the recreation director of an adult home is typical:

> We feel fortunate to be part of the Community Service Program. Sixty residents out of 120 who live at our

> facility do not have any known next of kin. Some people feel alone and cut off from the world. The youth bring the world in ... They bring laughter and smiles. The message they bring to our residents is "you matter." ... The residents are a bit happier. They feel a bit better. It is a reason to come out of their rooms.

Another essential aspect of young adolescents' roles in these programs is that they have tangible, visible outcomes. In community improvement projects in the 4-H Youth Volunteer Program in New York State, for example, streams are cleaner or newspapers are printed or voters are registered. The folklife research project sponsored by ARTS, Inc., in New York City resulted in three exhibitions; before that, students had photographs, drawings, interview transcriptions, and reports to show for their work.

Flexibility and Limits

The project team had assumed that "one-shot" efforts at community service, in general, offer only limited opportunities for youngsters to learn skills or broaden their horizons. This assumption was confirmed by observations and interviews with various programs' staff. Activities such as fund-raising for a particular cause or holiday visits to nursing homes and hospitals do fill some needs, but, it was found, they lack both continuity and meaningful learning components.

Many programs do offer some flexibility, however, recognizing that young adolescents' needs and interests can shift a great deal. Several allow for varying levels of commitment: youngsters can get involved in ongoing or shorter-term projects, as at Shoreham or in ARTS' folklife research project. Other programs adapt to this age group by making all projects short-term or structuring them with a series of clear stages. The partnerships in Arlington, Ohio, for example, last six weeks. In the Helper Program, students move through defined stages of training, observation, then actually working at their placement sites.

Allowing the young volunteers to have some authority and decision-making power in their service roles is critical. All of these programs, however, set clear parameters for students. Young adolescents are not developmentally ready, for the most part, to take on a project from conception to realization. "What do you want to do?" is a question most are not yet equipped to answer. The adult leaders in these programs choose service roles, find placement sites, and help the youngsters set goals. "Adults need to be perfectly clear in advance about what

they have to do," says Mary Scherbatskoy of ARTS. Within those parameters, the young people can make choices and decisions and plan their activities, as they did in ARTS' folklife research project. According to the programs' staff members, setting the limits for young adolescents generally allows them to have more successful experiences.

COMMON ELEMENTS

The Adult Leader

"The single most important factor is who runs the groups," says Pam Toole, who runs the Palo Alto Peer Counseling Program, echoing colleagues throughout the country involved in service learning programs for early adolescents. A consistent, well-trained, and sensitive adult leader is probably the most important element in every one of the programs cited here. This leader must be skilled at training, at helping youngsters articulate their successes and failures, at helping them find the personal meaning of their experiences. In addition, he or she must enjoy working with young adolescents, be convinced of their ability to contribute, and be committed to their growth.

This is not easy. Junior high and middle school youngsters are difficult, contrary, inconsistent. But, says Scherbatskoy, "Most people do things that are too easy for kids. And kids are very smart. They know when what you're doing isn't important." And, conversely, when what they're doing is important, they show unexpected responsibility and stability. Program leaders testify that the personal rewards of working in effective programs for these youngsters are immeasurable.

The Learning Component

The importance of providing adequate time and skilled leadership for training and reflective activities cannot be overemphasized. Young adolescents require careful training before they can assume new roles and work with people different from themselves. In the programs highlighted here, training time varies widely, but most staff members agree that between ten and twenty hours is the minimum needed.

The nature of this training is as critical as its duration. Those who work with young adolescents stress their need to move around, to get involved in activities. These programs have developed training curricula using discovery learning: role playing, simulation exercises, and

the like, which allow youngsters to practice their new roles and make concrete their fears and expectations.

The training must also be specific to the roles the young adolescents will play and the population with whom they will work. If they are working with the elderly, for example, program leaders agree that there should be some advance discussion about death and dying as well as aging. If they are working with the disabled, they need information about the specific disabilities they will encounter and the limitations these impose on activities they might plan.

Reflection, which allows the young service providers to make sense of their experiences and make explicit their own growth, is also activity-based in these programs. In activities much like those in the training curricula, youngsters act out and discuss their successes and difficulties, write in their journals, practice new skills, receive more training as needed, and get feedback on their progress. According to practitioners, weekly or, at the very least, biweekly meetings are ideal. Some programs, for a variety of reasons (discussed in the section on "Obstacles" later in this report), are unable to meet this schedule.

A related important element is <u>supervision at the placement site</u>. Young adolescents frequently need guidance or encouragement, especially when they first take on new responsibilities. Whether it be done by their teachers, as in the Shoreham program, or by the agency staff at the site, as in the Helper Program, consistent and sensitive supervision is necessary.

Even when receiving staff at the placement site are not responsible for supervision, they need to be prepared not just to accept the youngsters, but to help them understand and reach out to the people with whom they will work. These young adolescents are inexperienced and vulnerable. They need the assurance of staff members who are aware of them, can offer constructive criticism and positive reinforcement, and are genuinely pleased to have them at the agency. When this does not happen, youngsters notice and are discouraged, as one Shoreham volunteer pointed out in his journal:

> There was one incident on 2/23 when we came into the class and the teacher said, "Oh, you're here again." That really ticked me off. I was ready to just walk out and not go again. This was a disappointment. If someone was coming into my classroom, I would greet them with a big hello and make them feel welcome.

Taken as a whole, training, supervision, and reflection comprise the learning component of each of these community

service programs. Without them, service activities would exist in a void -- not related to youngsters' experiences in or outside of school.

Although current data on program outcomes are inadequate, they do indicate that the programs' impacts on young people have been very positive. Program administrators and participants are convinced of this, and the project team's observations support these convictions. The programs' learning components, varied as they are, are clearly responsible for solidifying these impacts.

Student Selection

How students are selected for these programs seems to reflect the assumptions and goals of program developers. Some programs choose to target particular groups of students, either because of their needs (e.g., the Pyne Poynt Youth Leadership Program for "at-risk" youth) or their talents (other programs only enroll the "stars"). Most of the programs featured here, like New York City's Resolving Conflict Creatively Program, aim for a cross-section of students representing the school or community's entire population. Based on the models presented in this report, it is evident that all kinds of youngsters can participate enthusiastically and can contribute productively in community service.

Recognition

Receiving public recognition for their volunteer work is very important to this age group and seems to reinforce their newly won self-confidence and awareness of their own growth. All the programs described here provide that recognition in some way, from special tee-shirts, like those worn by Magic Me participants and by the mediators in the Resolving Conflict Creatively Program, to celebrations, sometimes involving parents, like those given by Friendly PEERsuasion and the Jones-Village Partnership Program. The key to this recognition, according to program leaders, is the collective acknowledgment of accomplishment, the conviction that, "I did this!" Young adolescents, so often filled with self-doubt, sometimes need this recognition in order to believe in their own accomplishments.

COMMON OBSTACLES

With few exceptions, practitioners who initiate community service programs serving early adolescents, no matter how convincing the evidence or how committed the

staff, will face obstacles. While this survey is encouraging in many ways, there are still few places where community service is integrated into school or youth programs. To some extent, this is undoubtedly due to lack of awareness of the benefits of service learning programs for this age group. But programs face many other obstacles, regardless of their differing communities or student populations.

Institutionalization

The single biggest obstacle faced by almost all the models featured here is the uncertainty of their continued existence. Seldom have the school-based programs become an institutionalized part of the school. There are, of course, exceptions: among them, Palo Alto's Peer Counseling Program, the Shoreham-Wading River Middle School's Community Service Program, and Colorado Springs' HUGSS Program.

Almost all the other school-based programs are "add-on" or "pull-out:" they happen after school or pull youngsters out of their regular classes for program activities. This is certainly not ideal for the youngsters involved or for the program's stability. Debby Hinderliter, in Indianapolis, put her Peer Counselors Program "on hold" rather than turn it into a pull-out program. The Resolving Conflict Creatively Program, in New York City, represents a sort of middle ground: while the mediation component is a pull-out program, the basic peace education curriculum is integrated into regular classroom work. In this particular case, the pull-out portion of the program is thus less vulnerable to being cut.

In community agency programs, such as the Girls Club's Friendly PEERsuasion Program or Leadership, Inc.'s Youth Leadership Program, continued existence depends upon funding, always precarious.

Where community service is recognized as an integral component of the school or agency program, staff members can devote their energies to program development and improvement rather than to its survival.

Logistics

The logistical difficulties experienced by these programs are as varied as the programs themselves and range from finding placement sites to recruiting adult leaders, from buying refreshments to scheduling special events. Two difficulties are fairly common across programs, however: scheduling and transportation. In programs like Shoreham's, where designated staff spends most or all of its time on the

program, solutions are easier to work out than in those where already overburdened school administrators or faculty must deal with these logistics.

Many of the school-based models experience scheduling difficulties primarily because they are not integrated into their schools' curricula. Project Humanity in Minneapolis, Minnesota, is a case in point: the adult leader, himself a special education teacher with a full schedule, is able to meet with the peer tutors as a group for reflective activities only two or three times a year. In some programs, students and their adult leader meet during lunch, as they often do in the Helper Program; sometimes they meet after school; sometimes they are pulled out of regular classes, with the burden of making up any missed work on their own. Seldom are any concessions made for students who participate in community service. And this makes participating most difficult for the very students who may benefit the most: those who are struggling with academic work.

Even in schools where the training and reflection are scheduled during the school day, scheduling is difficult. Few middle or junior high schools use modular scheduling or other devices that permit double class periods or other flexible arrangements. A notable exception, again, is the program in Shoreham. Thus, it is nearly impossible for most programs to juxtapose the learning component and the work placement to complement each other.

Another common difficulty is transportation to the placement site. Rare indeed is the school district, like Shoreham's, that is willing and able to provide transportation. More often, buses must be hired (at great expense), parents lined up, or other, sometimes complicated, arrangements worked out. Usually, these must meet strict district and insurance guidelines. Some programs have avoided these difficulties by providing service right in their own schools, as the Peer Counseling Programs do, or at sites within walking distance, as some Helper Programs do.

Educational Reform Mandates

Some of the most pervasive and difficult obstacles to overcome appear under the banner of reform. About 35 states have introduced initiatives that either add hours to the school day, increase course requirements for the high school diploma, require remedial classes in reading and computing, or place greater emphasis on standardized test scores. New York State illustrates this problem: the Regents Action Plan, developed at least partially in response to A Nation At Risk, requires more minutes in the junior high/middle

school week than some school schedules allow. In response, some administrators are reducing offerings in the arts, while others are eliminating homerooms. Concerned about covering a tightly-defined curriculum, only the most creative will find ways to provide the time and personnel essential to service learning programs. An Indiana state mandate, in fact, is what eliminated the activity period at Stony Brook Junior High School in Indianapolis and, with it, the Peer Counselors Program. In this case, at least, the drive for excellence has pushed out a popular and appropriate program for young adolescents.

Chapter 5
RECOMMENDATIONS

Much can be learned from the case studies presented in this report. The most obvious lessons are relevant to those interested in developing or improving service learning programs for young adolescents. Additionally, others -- including policy-makers at the federal, state, and local levels; school administrators; community agencies; and teacher training institutions -- must also be involved in creating policies, practices, and attitudes that will encourage the expansion of community service programs for early adolescents. Some recommendations for all of these groups follow.

Program Development

Based upon the models presented in this report, program developers and administrators should consider, at a minimum:

1. Appropriate service roles for early adolescents: involve interpersonal relationships; have concrete value to those served; allow for varying levels of commitment; and set clear limits.

2. Key program elements: consistent, well trained, and sensitive adult leaders; training and reflective activities; supervision at the placement site; participation of students with varying abilities and strengths; and public recognition of the youngsters' accomplishments.

3. Likely obstacles: precarious existence; logistical difficulties, especially with scheduling and transportation; and educational reform mandates.

Policy

A national youth policy is long overdue. Those who set policy at the state and national levels -- where education policy is increasingly set -- cannot any longer ignore the needs of our nation's young people. Policy-makers should consider:

1. A basic approach to all education and programming -- in and out of school -- that respects and responds to the developmental characteristics and needs of each age group, especially early adolescence.

2. A more comprehensive and less constraining policy than the 1980s epidemic of rules and requirements, which was not policy but a "laundry list."

3. Provision in state and national policy for local flexibility that responds to particular climates, needs, and conditions.

4. Funding to support a changeover to action learning and service learning in the schools, with emphasis on those educating the middle grades.

Staffing

Whether service programs are school- or community-based, they require many of the same qualities and skills in their program staff. One of the most critical of these is the ability to be a facilitator: a teacher or group leader who can guide, counsel, elicit, hold hands, listen, applaud. The facilitator lets young people make decisions -- and, sometimes, mistakes -- rather than telling them how to do it. Yet the facilitator also provides a safety net, intervening when necessary, and setting appropriate limits -- but without taking over. This role, while educational in nature, is very different from that of traditional teacher. Training and practice are therefore crucial for effective program leaders.

In addition, professional training needs to encompass a developmental approach: exploration of the capacities and capabilities of young adolescents rather than emphasis on their deficits.

Teacher training institutions and graduate schools of education should consider:

1. A course of study that provides new and potential teachers with strategies for connecting school and community -- and with opportunities to practice these strategies.

2. Emphasis on experiential learning at all levels -- especially for early adolescence.

3. Required study of human development; rather than a focus on one level (i.e., early childhood, elementary, secondary), examination of the stages preceding and following this level.

4. Collaboration with schools in order to place education students in community service practicums and internships where they have opportunities to work with young people and lead discussions or seminars.

Community Agency Programs

Community agencies need to view adolescents not only as "clients," but also as resources: potential adjuncts or aides who can provide as well as receive services. Many existing community agency programs, always strapped for funds, could benefit greatly from the volunteer help of young adolescents, providing there is staff willing and able to supervise and support them.

Agencies with child care programs, for example, could use young adolescents as teacher assistants; those dealing with groups in conflict could involve youngsters as active problem-solvers or mediators.

School-Based Programs

The school's role in nurturing and encouraging appropriate and positive cognitive, social, and ethical development among young adolescents leads to the conclusion that community service programs belong in school.

Policy-makers and school administrators should consider:

1. Integration of community service into the school curriculum, rather than continuing to view it as an "add-on" vulnerable to budgeting and scheduling constraints. The social studies curriculum is especially appropriate for such integration.

2. Recruitment of students with a mix of abilities -- not only "at-risk" or "stars." Research and experience show that students learn a great deal in mixed ability groups, growing in cognitive as well as social and ethical areas. In addition, in community service programs youngsters are able to show strengths not usually called upon in school.

3. Sequential programs within the school, especially middle schools that start as young as fifth grade, where students begin by helping their peers or younger students and then, with experience, move out into the community.

4. A coordinator of community service -- even on a part-time basis -- who can respond to teacher- or student-initiated requests for curriculum-related placements, head off problems early, provide liaison with community sites, and take care of logistics.

5. Working with local teacher training institutions, colleges, universities, even community colleges, to share coordination and leadership of after-school programs.

NEED FOR A RESOURCE CENTER/CLEARINGHOUSE

This survey, while preliminary in nature, underlines the need for a clearinghouse and resource center for information, technical assistance, and networking. Such a center will not only assist practitioners and youth workers in creating and strengthening community service programs; it will also help to shape policy at the local, state, and national level.

Responses were enthusiastic and numerous to the project research team's inquiries. They highlighted the need -- even hunger -- in the field for more exchange of information, for coalition-building, and for enlisting the support of policy-makers and funders.

These responses, together with requests for information and assistance received at the Helper Program office, reports in the media, and discussions at conferences and meetings of national groups indicate that interest in community service as a way of re-connecting youth to the mainstream is at a new high. Many schools, youth-serving agencies, and individuals, recognizing the wastefulness of "reinventing the wheel," welcome information about existing models.

In addition, concern is growing in rural areas about the lack of constructive programs for young adolescents. Like their urban counterparts, rural youth are prey to problems related to poverty and isolation. There is a challenge to be met in adapting existing models for use in sparsely populated areas, where community and youth both stand to benefit from developing new strategies for youth participation.

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RESOURCES

In addition to the programs cited in the foregoing pages, some of the organizations that can provide information on action learning and community service programs and policy are these:

Center for Youth Development and Research
University of Minnesota
386 McNeal Hall
1985 Buford Avenue
St. Paul, Minnesota 55108
612-624-3700
(repository of files of National Commission on Resources for Youth)

Constitutional Rights Foundation
601 South Kingsley Drive
Los Angeles, California 90005
213-487-5590

Institute for Responsive Education
605 Commonwealth Avenue
Boston, Massachusetts 02215
617-353-3309

National Crime Prevention Council
733 15th Street, NW
Suite 540
Washington, DC 20005
202-393-7141

National Society for Internships and Experiential Education
2nd Floor
124 St. Mary's Street
Raleigh, North Carolina 27605
919-834-7536

National Middle School Association
4807 Evanswood Drive
Columbus, Ohio 43229
614-848-8211

SerVermont
PO Box 516
Chester, Vermont 05143
802-875-2278

VISTA/Service Learning Programs
806 Connecticut Avenue, NW
Room 1000
Washington, DC 20525
800-922-1400

Youth Service Opportunities Project
15 Rutherford Place
New York, New York 10003
212-598-0873